



AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES (ACS) KUALA LUMPUR QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



JANUARY – MARCH 2013

Have a Safe New Year

Happy New Year! May 2013 bring you joy and success!

As you go about sightseeing and shopping in Malaysia, please don't neglect to take basic safety and security precautions. The crime rate in Malaysia is relatively low. However, pick-pocketing, purse snatching, hotel room and residential burglary, and residential crime occur more frequently in major metropolitan areas such as Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, and Penang. Most of these crimes are crimes of opportunity and taking precautions to protect your personal belongings will go a long way in preventing these cases.

You should use caution in all crowded entertainment, nightlife, and shopping districts throughout Malaysia. Try to avoid placing your purse in open view while driving. We have seen cases where windows were broken to snatch a purse on the passenger seat of a moving vehicle. Exercise caution when traveling alone at night and use only legitimate taxis or public transportation. Reduce the likelihood of becoming a crime victim by exercising the same type of security precautions you would take when visiting any large city in the United States.

Tax Season Is Right Around the Corner

As we see the close of another year and reflect on its passing, one item that U.S. citizens or Permanent Residents who live abroad may have questions about is filing taxes. Working and living overseas does not exempt you from filing a U.S. tax return, although much of your income may be exempt. Below are some common issues that may concern you.

Exchange Rates

Taxpayers must state the amount of income earned in U.S. dollars. If you receive all or part of your income or pay some or all of your expenses in foreign currency, you must translate the foreign currency into U.S. dollars. Taxpayers generally use the yearly average exchange rate to report foreign-earned income that was received regularly throughout the year. However, if you had foreign transactions on specific days, you may also use the exchange rates for those days. Exchange rates can be found at [Foreign Currency and Currency Exchange Rates](#). Yearly average currency exchange rates for most countries can be found at [Yearly Average Currency Exchange Rates](#).

Did you know that if you are residing overseas, you are allowed an automatic 2-month extension on your tax filing? If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien residing overseas, or are in the military on duty outside the U.S., on the regular due date of your return, you are allowed an automatic 2-month extension to file your return and pay any amount due without requesting an extension. For a calendar year return, the automatic 2-month extension is to June 15.

E-File your taxes. Everyone can e-file, and everyone can e-file Individual tax returns for free

Last year, nearly 100 million taxpayers opted for the safest, fastest and easiest way to submit their individual tax returns — IRS e-file. Since 1990, taxpayers have e-filed nearly 1 billion Form 1040 series tax returns safely and securely. E-file is the norm. And now, with Free File, everyone can file Form 1040 series tax returns for free! For more information on e-filing, visit <http://www.irs.gov/Filing>.

Want to find out more about filing taxes while living abroad? Visit the IRS site for overseas Americans at <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/U.S.-Citizens-and-Resident-Aliens-Abroad> for more resources.

Information on Acquiring a Social Security Card or Number

There is never a charge for a new or replacement Social Security card or Social Security number or to change your name with Social Security. Don't deal with middlemen who offer to get a Social Security card or number or change your name on your Social Security card and records. All Social Security services are available free of charge directly from SSA. Middlemen just delay the process and cost you money!

For more questions on obtaining a social security card replacement or a new SSN, contact us klacs@state.gov.

Social Security Benefits While Living Abroad

The ACS Unit can assist you in applying for and collecting social security and veterans benefits to which you may be entitled, but we do not have a Social Security (SSA) office at the Embassy. The SSA Office at the U.S. Embassy in Manila, Philippines, provides direct services to Social Security beneficiaries living in Malaysia.

If you are currently receiving social security benefits while overseas, there are certain life events that you must report back to the SSA in order to remain eligible for the benefits. These include:

- Change of address
- Work outside the U.S.
- If you return to work or your disability improves
- Marriage
- Divorce or annulment
- Adoption of a child
- Child leaves the care of a spouse or surviving spouse
- Child nearing age 18 is a full-time student or is disabled
- Death
- Inability to manage funds
- Deportation or removal from the United States
- Changes in parental circumstances
- Eligibility for a pension from work not covered by Social Security

For more detailed assistance or questions, please contact the Social Security Administration directly using one of the methods listed below.

General Enquiries:

001-632-301-2000, ext: 9

Mondays to Fridays 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (Malaysia and Manila are in the same time zone.)

Fax: 001-632-522-1514 or 001-632-708-9723

Email: FBU.Manila@ssa.gov

Mail:

Social Security Administration
American Embassy Manila
1201 Roxas Boulevard
Ermita Manila 0930
Philippines

If you have additional questions or need assistance for your specific case, please contact the ACS Unit at KLACS@state.gov.

Protect Yourself Against International Financial Scams

**SCAM
ALERT**

The ACS unit receives daily calls and emails about international financial scams involving Internet dating, inheritance, work permits, overpayment, and money-laundering. Many scams are initiated through the Internet; victims range in age from 18 to 81 and come from all socio-economic backgrounds.

While such confidence schemes have long existed, the explosion of the Internet has greatly increased their prevalence. Individual Americans have lost considerable money on these scams, ranging from a few hundred dollars to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Internet Dating and Romance Scams

U.S. citizens should be alert to attempts at fraud by persons claiming to live outside of the U.S., professing friendship, romantic interest, and/or marriage intentions over the Internet. Typically, once a connection is made, it is cultivated over a period of time to build trust, and then the correspondent asks the U.S. citizen to send money or credit card information for living expenses, travel/medical expenses, or "visa costs." Sometimes, the correspondent notifies the U.S. citizen that a close family member, usually a son or daughter, is in desperate need of surgery or other hospital care and begins to request monetary assistance. Internet dating and romance scams have advanced to the point where several U.S. citizens have reported losing tens of thousands of dollars through such scams. Correspondents who quickly move to expressions of romantic interest or discussion of intimate matters are likely scammers. A request for funds almost always marks a fraudulent correspondent. U.S. citizens are cautioned against sending any money to persons they have not actually met in person.

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/financial_scams/financial_scams_4554.html

If you have any question regarding a U.S. citizen in trouble while in Malaysia, please contact the ACS section at klacs@state.gov.

All of these scams have one point in common – the targeted person is led to believe that he or she has a chance to attain something of very great personal value (financial reward, a romantic relationship, etc) in return for a small up-front monetary outlay.

The State Department's information on international financial scams can help you report fraud to the appropriate U.S. authorities like the FBI, Secret Service, Federal Trade Commission, and U.S. Postal Inspector, or to the appropriate overseas authorities including the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the United Kingdom's Metropolitan Police.

Contact information can be found on the State Department's website that provides resources for victims.

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/financial_scams/financial_scams_3155.html

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4522.html

The first website includes steps that can be used to protect yourself against future identity theft because the fraud perpetrators can use your personal information to open bank accounts or obtain credit cards in your name. Remember, some losses may be tax deductible, so consult a qualified tax advisor or the IRS to see if you qualify.

Financial fraud can have an emotional impact on victims and their families. The Identity Theft Resource Center Victim Guide has information about the emotional impact of identity theft, and much of this advice is relevant to fraud victims.

http://www.idtheftcenter.org/v_resources/v_intro.shtml

Counterfeit and Pirated Goods

Do not buy counterfeit or pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are bootleg and knockoff goods illegal in the U.S., if you purchase them, you may also be breaking local laws. Please remember that U.S. passports can only be issued by the U.S. Department of State.

STEP: Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

Everyone receiving this newsletter has registered with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at www.travel.state.gov. Thank you for doing so! STEP allows us to reach you with important messages and lets us contact you in the event of an emergency. If you have American citizen friends who haven't, please encourage them to visit www.travel.state.gov and stay connected.



Don't forget, you can always reach us by email at klacs@state.gov, and at our website, www.malaysia.usembassy.gov.

Upcoming Holiday Closures

Upcoming holidays are listed below. Please plan ahead. Also, keep in mind that the work days just before and after a holiday are usually busier in the American Citizen Services Unit of the Embassy. Do not be surprised at a longer wait for consular services on those days. A complete list of all of our holiday closings for 2013 is available on-line at <http://malaysia.usembassy.gov/holidays.html>.

Jan 21	Monday	Martin Luther King, Jr
Jan 28	Monday	Thaipusam (Malaysia)
Feb 01	Friday	Federal Territory Day (Malaysia)
Feb 11&12	Mon & Tues	Chinese New Year (Malaysia)
Feb 18	Monday	President's Day
May 01	Wednesday	Worker's Day (Malaysia)
May 24	Friday	Wesak Day (Malaysia)
May 27	Monday	Memorial Day

Contact Us

Main Switchboard: 60-3-2168-5000

When dialing from outside of Malaysia, first dial the international access code (011 in the U.S.), then the Malaysia country code (60), then the area code (3), and finally the Embassy number (2168-5000).

Malaysian Mailing Address:

Consular Section, U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur
376 Jalan Tun Razak
50400 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

International Mailing Address:

Embassy of the United States Kuala Lumpur
376 Jalan Tun Razak
50400 Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

U.S. Mailing Address:

Consular Section, U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur
DPO AP 96535-8152

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